

Flu News -- Straight Facts about H1N1 and the 2010-11 Flu Season

Last year's outbreak of the pandemic H1N1 influenza — often called "swine flu" — made the last flu season more complicated, and more worrisome than usual. As this year's flu season rolls around, many questions linger. Is H1N1 still a threat? Do I still need two flu vaccinations? Who exactly should get the flu shot this season? The American Lung Association is here to help, and has answers to help you, and your loved ones avoid the flu this year.

Why should I get vaccinated against the flu?

Influenza is a serious illness, which can kill up to 49,000 across the U.S., during a severe flu season. A flu vaccination is the best protection against the flu. Getting vaccinated not only protects you, but it helps keep you from spreading the flu to others.

What about H1N1 flu?

The 2009 H1N1 influenza virus is no longer at pandemic status and has become one of several flu strains that will be circulating this flu season. This year's flu vaccine will include protection against H1N1.

Last year I needed two flu vaccines. Will I need two this year?

No. Because the H1N1 virus is included in this year's flu vaccine, you will only need one vaccination this year to be protected.

Who should get vaccinated this year?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [recently recommended](#) that everyone six-months of age and older get vaccinated. The fact that healthy adults were hardest hit by 2009 H1N1 virus prompted the CDC to broaden the "at risk" group to everyone over six-months old. This new "universal" recommendation reinforces the fact that the flu is serious and that vaccination is your best protection.

Can you get the flu from the flu shot?

No. The viruses in inactivated influenza vaccine have been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine. The vaccine is very safe. Rarely an allergic reaction may occur; especially in people who are allergic to eggs in which the virus is grown. Serious problems from influenza vaccine are very rare. The most typical side effect is soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given.

Is the flu vaccine safe for children?

Children typically experience the highest rates of influenza infection each year. Influenza vaccines have been found to be both safe and effective for children.

Is the flu vaccine effective for older adults?

Adults 65 years of age and older are among the hardest hit by influenza. Annual vaccination remains the best protection. But, as people age, their immune function tends to decrease, which makes older adults not only more susceptible to infections, but also less responsive to vaccination. However, the FDA has recently licensed a new higher dose vaccine for people 65 and older. You can learn more [here](#).

Where can people go to get vaccinated?

There are several different places where people can go to get vaccinated against influenza. The first step is to ask your healthcare provider about influenza vaccination. You can also contact your local public health department or use the [Flu Vaccine Finder](#) to find a vaccination provider near you.

Where can I learn more about the flu?

You should always consult your healthcare provider for specific health and treatment guidance — including questions about the flu and how to protect yourself and your loved ones. There are also a number of websites you can visit for helpful flu information. You can visit our own [influenza](#) pages as well these other helpful sites:

<http://www.lungusa.org/about-us/our-impact/top-stories/flu-news-straight-facts-2010-11.html>

www.facesofinfluenza.org